DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 042 700 | 24 | SP 004 123

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TITLE	Community Participation in Teacher Education: Teacher Corps and the Model Programs. GEM Bulletin 70-4.
INSTITUTION	Georgia Univ., Athens. Coll. of Education.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C. Bureau of Research.
BUREAU NO	BR-9-0477
PUB DATE	Jul 70
CONTRACT	OEC-0-9-200477-4043
NOTE	6p.
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$0.40
DESCRIPTORS	*Community Involvement, Field Experience Programs, School Community Cooperation, *Teacher Education
IDENTIFIERS	CETEM, *Comprehensive Elementary Teacher Education Models, Teacher Corps

ABSTRACT

An expressed purpose of the Teacher Corps program is to encourage and assist changes in teacher education directed toward better ways to prepare teachers for work in areas of concentration of low-income families. Too often community involvement in such programs takes place after most decisions and plans have been made. As the 1970-72 Teacher Corps Guidelines are followed, most of the new proposals for training interns will reflect the movement toward competency-based programs. And since the Model Elementary Teacher Education Programs meet this condition, there will be a close cooperation between the Models and Teacher Corps. The effective preparation of Teacher Corps interns requires participation by the local community in the planning of that prepatation. The Model Programs, through their various provisions for local responsiveness, provide an excellent vehicle for accomplishing these desired outcomes. As one example, the Georgia Educational Model allocates a segment of the continuing inservice education of the teacher to cooperative planning by the local community, the teacher and the school system. All three of these would also share in the implementation of the proficiency modules, and university credit is designated for these "local-conditions" modules. The past has shown that community participation is vital. The present indicates that exciting new models can effectively facilitate that participation. (JS)

ED042700

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COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN TEACHER EDUCATION:

TEACHER CORPS AND THE MODEL PROGRAMS

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GEM Bulletin 70-4

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July, 1970

Note: This bulletin reports one of a series of investigations designed to develop, evaluate and implement a teacher education program model for the preparation of elementary teachers. This report was prepared pursuant to a contract with the Office of Education, U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. Contractors undertaking such projects under Government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their professional judgment in the conduct of the project. Points of view or opinions stated do not, therefore, necessarily represent official Office of Education position or policy. This bulletin may not be reproduced without permission.

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An expressed purpose of the Teacher Corps program is to encourage and assist changes within the institutions which educate children and prepare teachers.[1] The expected change within teacher education programs, via Teacher Corps, is directed toward better ways to prepare teachers for work in areas of concentration of low-income families. It is obvious that improved plans to prepare teachers for work with children from poverty communities must be responsive to the needs and influence of those communities. The limited success of many efforts on behalf of the poor can often be attributed to the absence of such responsiveness, while those efforts with broad community participation at all levels enjoy a higher probability of realizing their potential for all affected.

It seems clear that community involvement is less effective if it takes place <u>after</u> most of the decisions and plans have been made. Unfortunately, this pseudo-involvement has existed in Head Start, Community Action, and in some Teacher Corps projects. It is the intent of this paper to show how passive community <u>involvement</u> can become active <u>participation</u> in the preparation and training of Teacher Corps interns.

<u>Teacher Corps and the Model Teacher Education Programs</u>[2]

The 1970-72 Teacher Corps Guidelines call for preparation programs to be competency-based, individualized, and to offer university credit for experiences in the communities being served. The major emphasis at the 1969

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[1]United States Office of Education, <u>Teacher Corps Guidelines for Submission of Proposals for 1970-72 Programs</u>. Washington, D. C., TEACHER CORPS, U.S.O.E., October, 1969.

[2]The 10 Model Programs are best summarized in Analytic Summaries of Specifications for Model Teacher Education Programs; Final Report, developed for the U.S.O.E. by System Development Corporation, Falls Church, Virginia.

Teacher Corps National Conference in Washington in October was on the potential offered by the Model Programs toward better preparation of Teacher Corps interns. The Model Programs are competency-based, designed to offer more personalized instruction, and encourage the gaining of competencies in direct experiences. It seems very clear that the Teacher Corps and the Model Programs have much to gain from a close mutual relationship.

But the most significant aspect of the model program is the inherent provision in all of these models for responsiveness. The models are designed to be self-renewing and have mechanisms for constant change. To illustrate the provision for responsiveness and the promise it holds for the preparation of Teacher Corps interns, the model developed at the University of Georgia will be used.

The Georgia Educational Model, as most of the others, organizes learning experiences into modules rather than courses. A typical module in the Georgia Model directs the student to engage in certain activities which are selected to provide certain competencies. Proficiency is necessary for successful completion of the module and moving to the next module.

Early in the development of the Georgia Educational Model (GEM) it was recognized that the continuing training of teachers while they were working in local communities with children must be responsive to unique local conditions, needs, and influences. And since the inservice phase of the GEM program is roughly analogous to the general Teacher Corps plan, the relationships between the two are explored here.

The Plan

When the prospective teacher leaves the university and assumes the instructional responsibility for children, no less than 20 percent of that

teacher's continuing training will be directed toward the unique needs, conditions, and influences of that community. In other words, the GEM program provides for 20 percent of the teacher's graduate work and in-service education to be highly responsive to the local community. The units of instruction (proficiency modules) will be cooperatively designed through participation of the teacher, the community, and the local school system.

Applying this idea to the preparation of Teacher Corps interns, what the intern should know and how he should learn it (about the local community needs, values, expectations, etc.) will be determined in the local community. Active and cooperative participation by the intern, the local community representatives (including parents), and the local school system is necessary for the model to be responsive to the local community. And since the proficiency modules are the basic units of instruction leading to certification and degrees, the local community would be assured of participation in the Teacher Corps project <u>at the point where that participation has influence</u>.

For example, interns are normally expected to engage in some community work along with their work with children in school. For interns new to the community, it would be necessary for the intern to study that community. A series of proficiency modules would then be designed to organize that study. Representatives of the community would specify most of the content of the proficiency module, and also suggest the most effective ways of finding out about the community. This is a far cry from some of the past situations where community influence on intern preparation programs has been either absent or in the form of negative reaction to these programs after they have been planned.

The Promise

Such community participation in the design, development, and implementation of this important part of the interns' training program can:

1) insure close cooperation between the local school system, local community, and interns;

2) provide community-specific learning experiences for the interns;

3) insure university credit for experiences directly in the local community;

4) make the intern and the local community more responsible for the effectiveness of the training program;

5) provide greatly increased flexibility in intern training programs;

6) assure the local community that the training program will be responsive and appropriate to the needs and influence of the local community;

7) significantly change the teacher preparation institutions as locally produced proficiency modules become regular parts of their graduate and inservice programs;

8) significantly change the local school systems by increasing their community-responsive inservice commitment.

The Results

As the 1970-72 Teacher Corps Guidelines are followed, most of the new proposals for training interns will reflect the movement toward competency-based programs. And since the Model Teacher Education Programs meet this condition, there will be a close cooperation between the Models and Teacher Corps. The effective preparation of Teacher Corps interns requires participation by the local community in the planning of that preparation. The Model Programs, through their various provisions for local responsiveness, provide an excellent vehicle for accomplishing these desired outcomes. As one example, the Georgia Educational Model allocates

a segment of the continuing inservice education of the teacher to cooperative planning by the local community, the teacher, and the school system. All three of these would also share in the implementation of the proficiency modules, and university credit is designated for these "local-conditions" modules.

The past has shown that community participation is vital. The present indicates that exciting new models can effectively facilitate that participation. The future may well bring highly enriched results as the available potential is realized.